Letter No. 74.

~~Tuesday, Sept 30th~~
Thursday, Oct-2nd.

Major J. H. Massey
6 Palestinian Coy. The Buffs
M.E.F

My own darling sweetheart:-

I have not written you a letter since Sept-25th which is a week ago, & as you see, this one has been put off for two days. I can assure you, Barbara darling, that I am not becoming idle, or losing any interest in writing to you, or being at all hard up for anything to say — far from any of those things. But things have been happening. First of all, Frank Macaskie telephoned me on Saturday — from Jerusalem — having had many adventures & escaped from the Germans. He stayed with me until Tuesday — but I will tell you all about that later. The most important thing of all just now, is that I have decided finally & definitely that I am now going to do all in my power to be sent home, to you my darling. I have sent you an Aerograph about it today, & I hope that by the time you get this letter, I may have sent you another Aerograph to inform you more exactly what my chances are. I'm very much afraid darling, that there is not a great amount of hope — but I intend to try & go on trying. It is all like this — there is such a thing as compassionate posting to the U.K. But the number of officers & men sent is very small indeed. And so when the time comes to send a batch, applications are asked for, & these are carefully examined by G.H.Q., & the selection is made. I really do not know who judges the degree of compassion, or how it is judged — & I am a little afraid that

luck plays a part in the selection. But I feel that very few people can have a more tragic story than ours during this war. And now that we have stood up to being parted for a whole year – I just intend to make every possible effort to put an end to this miserable & wretched state of affairs. I shall have to tell the whole story – about the boy – about our darling Lisa – about my going away – about your father's death, – about your miserable pregnancy – & now, although that was safely born & is fine, your wretched nerves & worrying about Max, about me, & about your mother. That you are not strong enough to do very much work, & yet when you are not working, your mind is too free to think & worry. It might help enormously, if Mr. Hughes, or a doctor who knows you well, would state in definite terms, that my return home would have a direct & beneficial effect on your health & mind & nerves. Hughes in London, is rather a difficulty, but he knows your case very well now, & you could write to him & maybe your doctor could too. I do hope that he will feel that he can & should write this letter. Maybe it is not necessary in the case of an officer – but it may be, in which case it would be very helpful.

I will tell you what I have done so far – I spent a long time composing my letter. I enumerated all our sadness – & also pointed out my earnest desire to serve with the 7th Bn. And then I said how hard I had worked, & mentioned my good confidential reports. I then decided to go & see

Col. Leicester + ask him for his advice. I have one advantage at the moment – Col L. has become Area Commander for the time being, the other Col having gone away, + I am hoping he will keep the job. He said first of all, that my wanting to go to the 7th wanted out no ice at all, with which I suppose I must agree – so many people being the same way. In my letter I had said our position was desperate – he said he did not agree with that – but thought that perhaps I had a chance. He said I was too late for this time, those people I am told, are going off first now. But that I should wait until applicants are called for again, + then send my letter in. He thought this was the best way. + told me to go + see his senior Staff officer. I did this, + he confirmed Col L's statement – + advised me to prepare my letter very carefully. + then it was possible for the Area Commander to mark it with his ideas, if he sent it on to G.H.Q. So, my darling – I have the advantages of what I think is a strong case – being a Major + a Cd. I can make myself heard a little better – + if Col L is still Area Cmd when the next time comes, he knows me + that I am not a fake, + so my application has a better chance of getting over the first fence, + possibly with his blessing. On the other side – it is all a little chancy, depending so much on who has the final say.

The number of vacancies is so small. And being a C.O. & a major, they may say I cannot be spared, & that my experience with this Coy cannot be replaced. So I am trying not to hope too much & you must do the same darling. But, at the same time, you must do all you can think of all you can, to help.

And dearest heart - this is very important indeed. You must not worry about this & so add to your cares - & you must make up your mind that if I should get a flat refusal, you will not take it hard, & so make matters worse. I shall do all I can, try to think of everything, & even if I fail this time, I shall try again & again. So that instead of only having a very dim & distant end of the war to which to look forward - you can think of me always trying to get home to you. Oh darling dearest Barbara - I am dying & longing & pining to see you - & to see Maria - I am thinking of nothing else at all. I am crazy for you. Only to hold you in my arms, & feel your body - your heart beating against mine - to kiss your lips - your eyes. To look at you, tell you myself how much I love & adore & cherish you, really tell you how much I have missed you & thought of you & felt for you. Is it really possible darling - after all our misfortunes - that now the wheel has really

turned in our favour. & we can be so fortunate. I feel honestly & truly, that nobody is more deserving than you — & me too. And perhaps justice & fortune & luck will all work for us at the same time. & it may really happen.

But I must tell you some of my news — I shall not finish this tonight. & if there is anything to add about the all important matter, I will add it tomorrow.

About Frank — you will be wondering what next. First of all I write & tell you he is dead — & then that he is wounded & a P.O.W. Well, I knew that the first was not true. But you could definitely have knocked me over with a feather & fanned my brow, when word came to me last Saturday that "2/Lt Maasrkie" wanted to speak to me on the phone. I guessed. & it really was Frank, from Jerusalem. He had been wounded, a bullet in the buttock, straight through, & out at the other side — taken prisoner by the Germans, & well looked after & declared by them — then put in a prisoner of war camp. He decided very early on that this was no place for him, & after many varied & exciting adventures, about which I may not tell you, he arrived in Palestine. Poor Frank — he has lost all his kit, every stitch & piece — all his photographs — & all his letters. I know exactly how he feels. And now, having been posted as dead, even in the English papers, he has to start all over again, getting his address straight, & waiting months until he is answering letters which are in reply to his letters. Though

things are far easier now, with A.Gs. & HCs & Pcs. It was wonderful to see him again - quite apart from his link with Dewary & Jobowen - he is the first person I have really talked to since January.

He was still in a peculiar set of borrowed civilian clothes - or at least, they had been presented to him by friendly natives. I met him in Tel-Aviv - & we came back here & talked & talked. Sunday we just spent quietly, & I had work to do - & in the evening we made a really big hole in a bottle of whiskey. On Monday I took him up to Jerusalem, where he had to report. & I had some things I had to do. He on Tuesday morning, to went off to Cairo. He has to report there, fit himself up again - & then when he is, I hope, coming back here. & we are going off on 10 days leave together, & really see & do Palestine. In Jerusalem I called to see (the Hon) Edwin Samuel, told him our plans, & he & his v. charming wife are going to organise our 3 days there, which should be wonderful. As they are both extraordinarily busy people, it is very kind of them.

After this, we are going to hire a car, & Ben is coming with us & we shall go to as many places as possible in the time. The great advantages of Ben coming with us, are that he knows the country, & he knows Arabic & the Arabs. Alone, we should probably have little or nothing to do with the Arabs, as so few of them speak English,

they are funny people anyway. I am looking forward to it all tremendously. I hope to goodness Frank is not refused leave. It will be a damn bloody shame if he is, after his courageous performance; most people just sit in those P.O.W. camps & decide that that is that & make no attempt to do anything about things. Really, it was good to see Frank again, darling. He is so darned pleasant, & rolling eyes, & interesting, & decent living, & well bred - after all this funk I have been thrown together with.

I must go to my bed. Goodnight darling sweet Barbara I am loving you & thinking of you more than ever xxxxxxxx. Harry.

Friday, Oct 3rd There is really no more news today, about the all important matter - obviously & unfortunately, there cannot be news every day, or even every week. The only thing is that I have decided that I must do everything that I possibly can do, to further my case, & to find strings to pull & generally put myself forward. One opportunity has already presented itself, & it is in connection with a great Jewish recruiting drive which is just about to begin. It seemed to me that if I could arrange for myself to make a speech at an important meeting, I should generally be making myself better known & so improve my chances. So I pushed myself forward as much as I could. & I have heard today that I am in fact to be asked to speak. And so I hope it will be a large & important meeting & that I shall be able to do well, & that I shall receive any amount of publicity. After all, if, as

I am told. these things are inclined to be a matter of luck. I am going to do all I can to be one of the lucky ones. If only I could know when applications will next be called for - as I remember it is a month after application before one knows one's fortune, & it is then another month until one make a move in the right direction. So I shall have to take things calmly & get it off my mind as much as I can. Sweetheart I do want to come home & make you happy - I would bear any thing myself if only I could do that one thing.

Today I had your E.F.M. calls saying no news from me for sometime. there is only one word for it when this correspondence goes wrong - it is infuriating. Because I try so hard to keep you well supplied. I suppose it is caused to some extent by the three forms & methods of working & all taking different times to get home. I had six letters from you in September between the 5th & the 23rd but since then I have had nothing at all - that seems a very long time nowadays. I shall select three numbers to send to you tomorrow - but I hope my letters will have arrived by now.

I must stop now - & send this away by the afternoon post. Please think of everything that you can do, my darling - you know I shall be doing the same. And please, dearest sweetest, do not speculate or worry about this too much. Whatever happens, you must know & remember always, that I love you with all my heart & body & soul, & you are everything in the world to me. A big kiss to Marie - & all the others to you, sweet Mary.

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Mrs. H. Massey.
Dolton House
Coreland.
Park Lane
Pillory Hill.
Beaconfield
Nose Mayo.
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Nr. Plymouth.

H. Massey.